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FACTORS IN THE SUCCESS OF RURAL ORGANIZATIONS

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CONCLUSIONS

This study shows the extensive use being made of special-interest groups. Such groups are admirably suited for urban conditions, and they appear to function with greater efficiency in pursuit of definite objectives in the representative rural communities analyzed in this study. However, the study indicates that rural leaders will do well to ponder before they commit their community to a large number of special-interest groups. The more restricted the program or goals of an organization, the fewer persons, urban or rural, the group can hope to attract.

This study indicates the wisdom of including both men and women in farm organizations or organizations appealing particularly to rural people. Farming is essentially a family occupation. It is the joint responsibility of both husband and wife. The farm organizations which succeed in making lasting contributions to rural progress are those which include all members of the family. Experienced county agents and rural workers no longer neglect to present their case to the farm wife if they seek to influence the farmer to take some desired action.

Community organization is the essence of rural democracy. This study indicates that training and developing the members and leaders of rural organizations offers the surest method of developing the human resources of rural Kentucky and improving Kentucky agriculture as a way of life. Improvement of livestock, of crops, of individual men, women, and children is a legitimate goal of farm leaders, but progress for rural people must be rooted in rural communities, rural organizations and the local leadership of rural men and women.

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Factors in the Success of Rural Organizations

By FRED BOYD*, MERTON OYLER and W. D. NICHOLLS

INTRODUCTION

A rural community lacks one of the essential elements of a community if it is without social organizations. Common interests, problems and purposes, centered in community institutions and organizations, give life, character and individuality to what is otherwise merely rural population. Many a rural organization apparently launched successfully soon fails. A similar organization grows and prospers in another community. Or, in the first community, other organizations are successful and flourish with less effort than was lavished on the defunct organization. Many a successful farmer stands helpless as he sees his church grow weaker or his cooperative farm organization die. Only in recent years have research institutions sought to discover why some rural organizations succeed and others fail. By means of case studies and the evaluation of the practices of rural organizations, research workers undertake to discover the factors which are essential to the success of rural organizations.

SCOPE AND METHOD OF THE STUDY

In the present study attention was centered on 16 rural organizations selected from the 70 found in four representative rural communities in Kentucky.** Table 1 shows the location and kind of organizations found. Table 2 gives the distribution of the 16 organizations.

It will be noted that 10 of the 16 organizations considered are churches. This proportion is in accordance with the findings of the companion study which definitely pointed to the rural church as the most important voluntary, formal, social organization in the three communities, Athens, Hebron, and Parksville. It was found that 60 percent of all persons scheduled, attended only meetings of

* Temporary assistant in rural life studies.

** A companion study was made of three of the communities, Athens, Hebron and Parksville, on a different phase of social organization. See Kentucky Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin No. 350, "Rural Organization Contacts in Three Kentucky Communities."

religious organizations.¹ This was for a period of one year. Contrary to one of the common beliefs concerning the declining influence of rural churches, 91 percent of all the 48,964 formal contacts were religious contacts.²

TABLE 1. ORGANIZATIONS FOUND IN FOUR COMMUNITIES

Organization	Athens	Hebron	Parks- ville	Oak Island	Totals
1. Church	2	4	3	1	10
2. Sunday School	2	4	3	1	10
3. Ladies' Aid	—	1	—	—	1
4. Women's Missionary Society	1	4	1	—	6
5. Young People's Meeting	1	6	1	—	8
6. Children's Missionary Society	—	1	—	—	1
7. Boys' Hi-Y Club	2	1	1	—	4
8. Girl Reserves	2	1	1	—	4
9. Future Farmers of America	1	—	—	—	1
10. 4-H Club	1	1	1	—	3
11. Home Economics Club	1	—	—	—	1
12. Art Club	1	—	—	—	1
13. Debate Club	1	—	—	—	1
14. Lodge	2	4	—	—	6
15. Parent-Teacher Association	1	1	—	—	2
16. Homemakers' Club	1	—	1	1	3
17. Cooperative Marketing Organization....	—	1	1	—	2
18. Community Council	—	—	1	—	1
19. Cemetery Association	—	—	1	—	1
20. Building and Loan Association	—	1	—	—	1
21. Farm Bureau Local	—	—	—	1	1
22. Farmers' Alliance Local	—	1	—	—	1
23. Garden Club	—	1	—	—	1
	19	32	15	4	70

The senior author attended one or more meetings of each of the 16 organizations, and a meeting of most of the 70 organizations. Leaders and members of these groups were asked prepared questions about their organizations and answers were recorded in the

TABLE 2. ORGANIZATIONS DESCRIBED

Organization	Athens	Hebron	Parks- ville	Oak Island	Totals
Churches	2	4	3	1	10
Parent-Teacher Association	1	1	—	—	2
Homemakers' Clubs	1	—	1	1	3
Farm Bureau Local	—	—	—	1	1
	4	5	4	3	16

1 Op. cit. p. 134.

2 Ibid, p. 134.

presence of the person interviewed. Significant remarks, however, were sometimes recorded after the interview. In addition to the prepared questions, the person interviewed was encouraged to comment freely concerning the community, the organizations, and the community leaders. The field work of the study was done between September, 1931, and June, 1932.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Rural Community. Those farm, non-farm, and village residents who have one or more common interests which hold them together in the local territory in which they reside.³

Organization. "A voluntary association of persons electing a regular set of officers, permitting membership by choice as opposed to automatic or compulsory membership, and having at least one 'face-to-face' meeting a year."⁴

THE FOUR COMMUNITIES

Two of the four rural communities are in adjoining northern Kentucky counties bordering the Ohio River; the other two are in central Kentucky, 55 miles apart. Each represents a different type of rural community and consequent organizational pattern.

The Hebron community, located 13 miles west of the Cincinnati metropolitan area, is a rural community permeated by urban influences. Oak Island, on the contrary, is an example of a rural population determined to remain rural altho but three miles off the concrete highway and almost as near the metropolitan area of Cincinnati as Hebron.

Athens, 10 miles distant from Lexington, felt the economic and social competition of that urban center. Organizations were discovering that rural leaders, like the trade of country stores, could be enticed to the city. Less ambitious in its organizational set-up, Parksville, in Boyle County, is a rural village where trade supremacy had passed to the county seat eight miles distant. Social cleavage had combined with economic changes in reducing the number of the community's social organizations. Topography, tenancy, and family status cut sharply into schemes for building up a united community.

Tables 3 and 4 compare Parksville, Athens, and Hebron, on

³ It will be noted that this definition involves both persons and area. If the family expressed allegiance (attendance as a member or as a visitor) to none of the formal voluntary activities of the community, this family's record was not included in the study. The author, after trial in each community, was reluctantly forced to give up the attempt to locate definite, fixed boundaries for the community.

⁴ Op. cit. p. 117.

points that are significant in rural communities. All three are unincorporated villages with populations of 159, 212, and 246, respectively. Oak Island is a smaller community which might more

TABLE 3. THREE COMMUNITIES COMPARED FOR
SIGNIFICANT ITEMS

	All three Communities	Parks- ville	Athens	Hebron
A. Entire community:				
1. Consolidated grade and high schools ¹	3	1	1	1
2. One-room grade schools	0	0	0	0
3. Active churches in entire community	9	3	2	4
In the village center	5	2	2	1
Outside the village center	4	1	0	3
4. Cemeteries	5	1	1	3
5. Post office	2	1	0	1
6. Rural routes from village center	2	2	0	0
7. On a railroad line	1	1	0	0
8. On a state highway	2	1	0	1
9. Local newspaper	0	0	0	0
10. Telephone exchange	1	0	0	1
11. Saturday night picture show	1	0	0	1
12. Summer dance pavilion	1	0	0	1
13. Chartered lodges	6	0	2	4
14. Bank	1	0	0	1
15. Grocery stores in entire community	14	4	5	5
In the village center	11	3	5	3
Outside the village	3	1	0	2
16. Restaurant	0	0	0	0
17. Flour mill	1	1	0	0
18. Gasoline filling stations ²	15	4	5	6
19. Bulk gasoline sales agency	1	1	0	0
20. Repair garages	5	2	1	2
21. Blacksmith shops	3	1	1	1
22. Barber shops	4	1	1	2
23. Undertaker	1	0	0	1
24. Resident practicing physician	1	0	0	1
25. Full-time pastor	2	0	1	13
26. Resident active teachers	18	7	5	6
27. Number of pupils in grades 8-12 incl.	253	71	99	83
B. The village only:				
1. Village center incorporated	0	0	0	0
2. Total population	617	212	246	159
3. Negro population	76	13 ⁴	63 ⁵	0
4. Negro families	21	4 ⁶	17	0 ⁷
5. White population	541	199	183	159
White persons under age 20	198	81	74	43
White persons age 20 or over	343	118	109	116
6. White families	141	47	42	52

1 Each of these is located in the village center.

2 Operated in connection with a grocery store or repair garage in each instance.

3 Not a resident pastor. Another church in the community has a resident part-time pastor with preaching services two Sundays a month.

4 Parksville has 3 negroes under 20 years of age, and 10 negroes age 20 or over.

5 Athens has 27 negroes under 20 years of age and 36 negroes age 20 or over.

6 At Wilsonville, 1½ miles distant but within the Parksville community, is a settlement of 22 negro families.

7 Eight negro families in entire Hebron community.

properly be denominated a rural neighborhood. An attempt is made in this study to interpret the economic, social, and organizational differences found in the four communities.

TABLE 4. PERCENT OF FAMILIES HAVING SPECIFIED SERVICES AND CONVENIENCES AND TOTAL NUMBER OF FAMILIES STUDIED IN THREE COMMUNITIES

Item	All three Communities	Parks- ville	Athens	Hebron
Automobile	74	65	72	88
Telephone	39	14	31	74
Radio ¹	46	39	41	60
Auto, telephone and radio	24	10	18	46
Neither auto, telephone, nor radio	18	26	22	4
Electricity	39	47	18	50
Daily newspaper ²	80	77	86	76
Religious publication ³	37	21	43	50
Farm paper ⁴	75	72	69	84
General magazine ²	66	56	61	82
No papers or magazines	7	10	8	2
Head of household and homemaker read no books in 1931	49	54	49	42
Farming was major occupation ⁵ of head of household in 1931	57	40	67	66
Live on all-weather road ⁶	92	95	94	88
Living in owned home	78	88	65	80
Number of families in the sample	158	57	51	50

1 Radios were counted only if in use during 1931.

2 Borrowing was included only if the interviewed persons mentioned that a paper or magazine was borrowed and stated that it was equivalent to a subscription.

3 Sunday school papers or quarterlies were not included.

4 Only 57 percent of the families in this study had farming as a major occupation (See footnote 5.) Hence the percent of farm families taking farm papers would be higher than the percent given in this table for all families.

5 For many of the farm families of Parksville community, the head of the household had another occupation which was more important. However, the percent of families not living on farms was larger for the Parksville sample than for the others.

6 Includes the private driveway.

Athens. This community, in Fayette County, is located in the Inner Bluegrass Region and has the most fertile soil, the largest farms, the wealthiest land owners, and the highest percentage of tenants of the four communities studied. Its achievements are due in great part to local leaders of unusual ability. The community has two churches, a consolidated school including a junior-senior high school, a Parent-Teacher Association, a Homemakers' Club, and two lodges.

Athens has a history dating from the early fort erected by Daniel Boone. It is located ten miles southeast of Lexington, so that residents go to the city for many of the services ordinarily performed

by an agricultural village. The merchandise sold locally consists chiefly of groceries and gasoline. A barber shop, blacksmith shop, and repair garage are the only other economic services. The type of soil and the topography have made tobacco, dairying, sheep husbandry, corn, and general farming the chief sources of farm income and have led to an increase of tenants and the rise of a class of land owners who have the means to satisfy, in the city of Lexington, almost any need or inclination.

Hebron. Located 13 miles west of Covington and Cincinnati, in Boone County, is the Hebron community. It lies partly in the limestone territory of the Outer Bluegrass and partly in the Ohio River bottoms. Dairying, sheep and poultry husbandry, fruit growing, truck gardening, and tobacco production are the chief sources of income. Altho agriculture is the major occupation, there is a growing class of non-farmer residents who work in the near-by cities. Many of the settlers in this area are of German stock, and the residents are thrifty and energetic.

In addition to four churches, a consolidated school, and a Parent-Teacher Association, this community supports four lodges, five grocery stores, a bank, a telephone exchange, building and loan association, a cooperative milk association, and a Saturday night picture show.

Parksville. Parksville, in Boyle County, is a village of 200 people, with three stores,⁵ a railroad station, and a consolidated county school of over 300 grade pupils and 55 pupils in the four high school grades. Parksville is on a state highway 8 miles southwest of Danville, a county-seat town of 7,000 population and the seat of Centre College.

The location of the community center on the edge of the Knobs that merge into fertile Bluegrass farm land makes a wide range in the size, type and fertility of the farms. Tobacco, raspberries, sheep, corn, dairy and poultry products are the chief sources of income aside from railroad and highway employment. Previous to 1931 railroad wages were of major importance in Parksville. The community needs new sources of employment.

The Parksville school community has a four-fold division in its residents due to topography and to social and economic status. For years, control of the school and membership in the Homemakers' Club had centered in a comparatively few local families living in

⁵ A former railroad employee added a fourth store since study was made.

or near the village of Parksville. These families are old residents. Generally speaking, it is characteristic of the people living in the Knobs to participate only in the social activities of their churches and of their schools.

Most of the trading of people in the Parksville community is done at Danville. Many of the more wealthy landowners attend Danville churches and send their children to the city schools. Sixty percent of the Parksville pupils are transported in buses. Some pupils live 12 miles from the schoolhouse.

A Homemakers' Club of 15 to 20 members is very active. A co-operative Raspberry Growers' Association and the three churches are the other principal organizations in the community. The Community Council functioned only about two years just prior to field work in this study. The Caldwell Presbyterian Church is three miles northeast of Parksville, toward Danville.

Oak Island. The Oak Island neighborhood⁶ or community, in Kenton County, has the smallest area, smallest population, smallest membership, and fewest organizations of the four communities studied. Oak Island supports but four organizations while Hebron has 32.⁷

The Homemakers' Club and Farm Bureau meet regularly in the one-room schoolhouse which had been purchased from the County Board of Education when the school was merged in a larger unit. The Baptist Church and Sunday School meet in the church building 50 yards from the schoolhouse.

This meeting center is located $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles southeast of Independence, and 16 miles from the Cincinnati Metropolitan area. Oak Island is an example of a community center serving a small area and a farm population of perhaps 60 adults. The residents state they expect to maintain their organizations. Within the community there is no store or other economic service, and there has been no local school since 1926.

CHURCHES

Few institutions, except the consolidated high school, place their stamp upon the rural community to so great a degree as

⁶ The term neighborhood is perhaps more accurate. It may not be of primary importance to attempt an exact distinction between a rural neighborhood and rural community. Such a distinction might be based on area, population, economic services, social organizations, cooperative accomplishments, other factors, or some combination of these. Local residents of Oak Island spoke both of their "community" and their "neighborhood."

⁷ Oak Island has added a 4-H Club since this study was made. Hebron added two new organizations, the Garden Club and the Farmers' Alliance, while the field work was in progress.

churches and their affiliated organizations. Ten churches are located in the four communities. Each is a rural church in rural surroundings. Five are in small villages, four in the open country, and one is in a hamlet having one store and four houses.

Three of the ten rural churches are strong ones. One of the three had been weak until a few years before when a revival added many young married couples, and a capable student pastor from a near-by University started full-time preaching services. Each of the three strong churches has a larger membership than the average, and both the men and women take a deep interest in the church. The stronger churches have active, local leaders.

One church has a full-time resident pastor, another a half-time resident pastor, and a third church, weekly Sunday services by the non-resident student pastor.

Seven of the ten pastors live 5 to 15 miles from their churches. The pastor of one of the three strong churches lives 90 miles away and preaches but one Sunday each month. Only three of the ten pastors devote full time to their pastoral duties.

An unusual opportunity was afforded to test the influence of the non-resident, part-time pastor, with seven of the ten churches in that classification. Contrary to the common belief, the effect on the churches thus served was not particularly adverse.

Four reasons for the success of the non-resident pastors may be suggested.

1. Nine of the ten pastors live near their parishes, tho most of them have to earn part of their livelihood in non-pastoral duties.
2. At least five of the ten pastors have markedly superior ability.
3. The pastors have an unusually strong interest in religion, particularly those of the stronger churches.
4. On the whole, the churches have intelligent, hard-working, self-sacrificing local leaders.

The last of these four factors seems to be the most significant in the success of a church. The local leadership and interest appeared to be of even greater importance to these ten rural churches than the influence of the pastors. This study seems to show that a rural organization may succeed if it has a circle of active, capable local leaders.

Conclusions as to Churches. A grave obligation rests upon

rural churches. They have a social influence equal to their religious mission. As a result of this study the following conclusions appear to be warranted:

1. Affiliated religious organizations should be relatively few. To be successful each affiliated organization must have leaders and members having the necessary time and means. "The best measure of justification for any new organization is the willingness of the people to give time required in attendance, and in service as officers."⁸

2. The adolescent and young married members of rural churches should be taught to share some responsibility in the sharing of which they are trained for larger service as adults. For example: Few rural churches visited had ushers or persons to whom similar responsibility had been assigned. People learn by doing and take an increased interest in the work with which they help.

3. The church membership rolls should be revised every few years. One village church had a church roll of 402 members, yet, in 12 months, only 80 members attended two church services or more during the year and gave five cents or more per Sunday to the Church or Sunday School. One member out of every six was unknown, or his or her address was unknown to the Secretary-Treasurer of the church, an old resident of the community.

4. More complete and accurate church records should be kept. The five Baptist churches had well kept minute books, even over periods of 80 and 100 years. Financial records were the least complete for nearly all the churches. In only one church did the treasurer distribute copies of the itemized year's financial record to the members. In most cases the old church records were not stored in a safe place.

PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS

Rural community leadership is passing from the denominational rural churches which appeal to only a part of the people, to the public consolidated schools which serve all the people. The part-time pastors usually yielded first place in community activities to the high school principal who lives in the community thruout the year. In many rural communities, because of his ability and character and the assistance of his wife, the principal has become a leading citizen and a most important force in the formation of group public opinion.

⁸ Fry, Luther C. "*Diagnosing the Rural Church*," pp. 36, 226.

The Athens P. T. A. and the Hebron P. T. A. were both strongly influenced by the principals and their wives. In each of these communities there was a strong public sentiment for good schools, and a demand for a trained, experienced principal of ability, intensely interested in his school and his pupils. The communities considered they were fortunate to have kept the same principal in one case for 13 and in the other 11 years. Hebron and Athens residents set a high mark in the community's attitude toward their public schools. Manifestly, in rural communities the length of tenure of the principal is of considerable significance.

Opinion is divided over the relative advantages of general-purpose and special-purpose organizations in a rural community. In a community essentially rural and lacking urban influences the general organization that appeals to the whole family has much to offer. In a rural community brought into rather intimate contact with urban influences, as in the Athens and Hebron communities, special-interest groups find their most favorable environment. For the Athens community the P. T. A. was one of the best examples of a successful organization.

Athens. Athens organized its P. T. A. in October, 1922, and Hebron in November, 1924. In both communities the organizations have excellent records of accomplishments.

The success of the Athens P. T. A. was due to:

1. Carefully worked out goals⁹ and budgets, and written reports to the members on the accomplishments and progress made by the organization.

2. Very capable, energetic, local women leaders.

3. The free, wholehearted support and cooperation given the officers of the P. T. A. by the members, the pupils and the teachers of the school, and the residents of the community.

4. The sustained, patient, professional leadership and enthusiasm of the principal, assisted by his wife, a tactful and willing worker, who interested herself in everything pertaining to the school.

The accomplishments of the Athens P. T. A. included: Budgeting \$500 for free hot lunches for 120 of the smaller children, \$60

⁹ Hummel, B. L. Circular 209, "Community Organization in Missouri," Missouri College of Agriculture, Columbia, Missouri. Boyd, Fred, Mimeograph No. 775 (1930) "Recognizing the Achievements of Rural Communities," Missouri College of Agriculture.

for playground equipment and athletic supplies, \$50 for books for the high school library, 200 quarts of tomatoes canned for the school lunch, the Fayette County School News placed in the home of every pupil, 100 gallons of tomatoes canned for use by the school, a pre-school health clinic, over 1,000 children's garments and shoes collected and distributed, 100 percent of the children immunized against diphtheria, 75 percent immunized against typhoid fever, a physical examination for all grade children, hot lunch for all children in need, the purchase of lunch-room equipment, hiring a public school music teacher, purchasing 250 books for the high school library, and 7 sets of supplementary readers for the grades. The net proceeds from the annual banquet, athletic contests, and school entertainments were the chief sources of the cash for financing such activities.

The Athens P. T. A. adopted a program of goals each year and a budget, the principal of the school being designated by the organization as its treasurer. Reports were made regularly to the members and mimeographed copies of the reports were sent to each home in the school district. Financial reports were given which showed each item of income and expenditure.

In 1927 the P. T. A. successfully presented to the County Board of Education the need for a new high school building, and planned how the community might help to finance the building. It was completed in the spring of 1928. A member of the Board observed, "Athens people always seem to have clearly in mind what they want, and they go after what they want with the expectation of winning their point."

Both within the school and the community the spirit of cooperation with the P. T. A. was strong. The teachers supported the work program and attended the P. T. A. meetings 100 percent.

The Athens Association, in 1930-1931, changed from the purely entertainment programs by school children to serious programs, such as each month having a competent speaker make a talk on one of the essential aims of education. An open discussion, then a social period followed. A very intelligent member of the organization, able to see the possibilities of the newer approach to the P. T. A. emphasis on parent education, gave as two needs of the organization:

1. "The members should have a deeper interest in the vital aims . . . of P. T. A. work, and . . .

2. "We are having to do too much in projects for raising money." A third need was more men in the organization. There was a slight tendency to let the leaders carry the load. The local women were also reluctant to prepare talks and take part in the programs.

Hebron. The Hebron P. T. A., in contrast with the practice of the Athens Association, stressed membership drives with prizes to the best pupil solicitors. In 1930-1931 there were 83 who paid their membership dues of 65 cents, and 72 who attended the monthly meetings at least twice during the year. The average attendance was estimated to be 48, half being paid-up members. This contrasts, for the same school year, with the Athens membership of 32, and an average attendance of 22 members, 10 of whom were teachers.

The Hebron P. T. A. started the school lunch room in the fall of 1925 and has run it successfully ever since. Tablets, pencils, confections, and nourishing and appetizing hot lunches were sold. The profit on lunches was negligible but considerable on confections.

The Hebron P. T. A., since February, 1925, at the request of the County Board of Education, had been paying the electric light bills of the school, amounting to approximately \$50 per year. In April, 1928, \$290 was paid out to extend the school for a ninth month. In addition, the P. T. A. had purchased water fountains, window shades, library books, stage curtains and track, auditorium chairs, a large kitchen stove, and lunch-room equipment. It aided needy children with clothing and free hot lunches, paid \$50 for gravel spread in the school yard, replaced window lights broken out by baseballs, and improved the school yard with shrubbery and flower plantings.

Funds for all these things were obtained from dues, dinners served at farm sales, bazars, food sales, and minstrel shows. In 1928, a lunch served at a farm sale netted \$52, as cakes, pies and other items were donated and only bread and meat purchased. Food was donated and canned each summer for school lunches that winter. In 1926, the annual Labor Day P. T. A. dinner, with much food donated, netted \$122.

The Hebron P. T. A. had always interested a number of men, altho the officers almost without exception have been women. The Hebron principal and his wife have aided their P. T. A. much the same as the Athens principal and his wife helped the Athens P. T. A. The customary programs were entertainments by school children, music by a local orchestra, and talks by parents and teachers. The members lacked confidence in their ability to appear on the program, and gradually the children's program became the custom. This was valuable training for the children but it intensified the feeling of the adults that their training was deficient in that respect.

The Hebron P. T. A. has had trouble in getting persons to serve as officers. In 1931, four leading women declined to permit their names to be voted upon for president. No one else being willing to serve, the president in office was re-elected for a fourth consecutive year. This is an undesirable condition in any organization.

The Hebron community is fortunate to have gone for years with no serious trouble over its schools. Perhaps the setting up of a program of new goals to be carried out by a smaller "inner group" more vitally interested would give the organization new life. Soliciting the membership of young married couples, requiring all teachers to support the organization, and expending all future money in ways where it will be noticed more by the general public might be effective in bringing about improvement in the effectiveness of the organization.

The nearness of large urban centers influenced the organizational set-up in Hebron. With 32 formal special-interest organizations, each had to compete for members and leaders in order to survive. So large a number of organizations made very heavy demands upon the time and energy of members and of local leaders. The Hebron community met these problems remarkably well. Yet a few of the more far-sighted leaders recognized the seriousness of this problem. One, in answer to the question, "What does Hebron need most?" replied "A week that has ten nights." Combining special-interest groups into organizations with a more general appeal does not appear, however, to be feasible at this time. The five women's religious organizations absorbed much of the time and interest of the women of the community. In the face of the competition of these and other special-interest organizations, the

achievements of the P. T. A., a general-interest organization, is noteworthy.

HOMEMAKERS' CLUBS

Of the various types of organizations studied in the four rural communities, the Homemakers' Clubs were the most successful in terms of accomplishment. They held the interest of all the members, and functioned without friction or internal dissension.

It is significant that in each of the three Homemakers' Clubs studied (Athens in Fayette County, Oak Island in Kenton County, and Parksville in Boyle County), the women have engaged in activities that are community projects rather than homemaking projects. The women in each organization have used their club in furthering community improvement outside the home. Inclusion of general community projects evidently increases the appeal to the women of the community and secures a wider circle of interested members. Adding such broad goals apparently strengthens the strictly home demonstration work of cooking, sewing, room improvement, interior decorating, canning, refinishing furniture, and similar enterprises. Use is now made of this practice thru the advice and even the requirements of state home demonstration leaders.¹⁰

One reason for the success of the Homemakers' Clubs is that rural and village women show more aptitude and a greater ability than men to work effectively in groups. Data collected in Athens, Hebron and Parksville showed that the women for every age group had more formal schooling than the men. The women averaged 1.1 years more formal schooling than the men.

Parksville. The Parksville Homemakers' Club was one of the most successful organizations studied. It was started jointly by the home demonstration agent and local leaders in March, 1921, as a Woman's Community Club "to work together for the mutual benefit and improvement of our community."¹¹ Community consciousness and broad aims are evident in the name chosen and this quotation from the constitution.

By means of bazars, ice-cream socials, lunches on election days, pic and candy sales, a home-talent play, dues of ten cents per month, and fines of five cents for each absence they raised over \$1200 in a community where financing is always a problem.

¹⁰ Missouri requirements for a "standard" Homemakers' Club.

¹¹ Secretary's record book.

The accomplishments of the club are too many to mention, but include: Paying for tiling around the schoolhouse, a cement walk and steps, a roof on the front porch of the school, cement steps to the porch, a cement retaining wall, grass seed, library books, and donating \$60 to apply on the cost of the school cistern. Financial aid was given in 1929 and 1930 to the Parksville stock-judging teams representing Kentucky high schools at the American Royal Livestock Show. The women paid for two annual clean-ups of the Parksville cemetery, raised an endowment fund of \$100 and persuaded the men to organize a Cemetery Association. Aid was given as the school grew from the two-room frame school to a ten-room brick plant with a gymnasium-auditorium and a two-room remodeled church building. Under the leadership of the women who organized free labor crews and fed the men and boys a community dinner each day, foundation trenches were dug for the 80 by 60 foot addition to the school, a basement to hold two carloads of coal was excavated, three carloads of sand, eight carloads of brick and all the lumber was laid on the ground without cost to the Board of Education. In addition, \$1,800 in cash was raised in the Parksville community and turned over to the board.

Local women, in telling how an organization that never had more than 20 active members could accomplish what has been described and many things not mentioned, gave as reasons: "All want to agree and work together..." "All are interested and eager to learn about improving their homes..." "All members are present at every meeting unless sickness prevents..." "Our home demonstration agent is good help..." "Our members have always cooperated and have stuck together..." "We have never had a member who has caused any trouble..." "We hold regular meetings."

These women have undoubtedly had good local leadership and a capable home demonstration agent to help them, but the outstanding characteristic of the club is the type of its members. Nearly all are capable, hard workers, community minded, interested in improved home practices, and inspired with a willingness to cooperate freely and whole-heartedly with the officers on whatever project engages the immediate attention of the club. Thru the years an excellent record has been maintained in such projects as sewing, canning, refinishing furniture, reseating chairs and making braided rugs, corn-husk mats and Christmas presents. The harmony among

the members is all the more remarkable considering the dissension within the community over school matters within recent years.

Another reason for the success of the club is the lack of competitive organizations. Parksville has never had a P. T. A., Ladies' Aid, bridge club, or fraternal order open to women. The women of the Baptist Church have not had a missionary society for years. The Christian Church has well-attended Sunday School and church services, but attempts no third activity. The Caldwell Presbyterian Church, three miles from Parksville, has a women's Missionary Society but it draws only one family from the village center.

The diversified work projects of the Homemakers' Club held the interest of all members. Members with special interests were made chairmen of important committees charged with specified duties. Shifting the emphasis on projects, as the needs of the community and the interests of the women changed, was a strategic move on the part of the leaders, whether planned or not. The organization, with an average attendance of 10 women the first five years and 15 women later, enlisted only a very restricted number of interested members. These women acted as local leaders on community projects and enlisted additional people when there was need. This is good organizational policy, but it was not used by many of the 70 organizations studied. Many organizations struggle along feebly or hasten to an early death because they enroll uninterested persons by high pressure methods. Evidence obtained from this study shows the futility of this method.

Aside from religious and school organizations the Homemakers' Club is the only community organization in the Parksville community. The Raspberry Growers' Association is a marketing cooperative that includes members from other sections of Boyle County.

Athens. The Athens Homemakers' Club, after an unsuccessful start in September, 1927, was successfully reorganized in September, 1928, after the purpose of the organization had been explained more carefully by local women leaders of the community. With major emphasis on improvement of rural homes thru instruction in meal planning, cooking, canning, baking, sewing, rug-making, and refinishing furniture, etc., this club branched off into charity sewing and the donation of clothing to poor children. The

club also sewed for and then donated clothing to a family whose home and belongings were destroyed by fire.

The women were drawn into more distinctly community activities when cows wandering along country roads and village streets destroyed their plantings of shrubbery around the grade and high school buildings. They promptly hired a lawyer to draft the necessary petition for an election, waged a vigorous campaign, and had a stock-law passed. This action outlawed the wandering, marauding cows from all public roads in that magisterial district of Fayette County. The women of this club held a public baking exhibit, a hooked-rug exhibit of 40 rugs, and an exhibit of 150 pieces of old furniture that had been refinished under the direction of the home demonstration agent.

The club has had difficulty in getting members to consent to act as officers, for no apparent reason. This is usually a forewarning of loss of interest, but in 1931 the attendance was good. Seventeen on the average were present at each monthly meeting, with 23 members on the roll. The Athens organization strengthened the social tie by having all-day meetings with visiting, games, and a picnic lunch at noon.

The possibility of conflict between organizations within the community was lessened by the high duplication of membership in the P. T. A. and the Homemakers' Club, the small membership of the local fraternal order open to women, and the few women belonging to the local missionary society. An officer of the Homemakers' Club said "The P. T. A. and our Club are so together it is hard to tell them apart."

A strong attraction of the Homemakers' Club was explained by a local leader. Altho a church worker, she said, "This organization makes an ideal way for women to have social contacts they cannot have when attending church." Church people often fail to appreciate that community-wide organizations draw on all the leaders of a community without regard to church membership, and mobilize some members and leaders not affiliated with any church, either within or without the local community. This is one explanation of the success of non-religious group organizations in a community in which religious bodies are functioning in an indifferent manner. In Athens this was particularly true because one or more members

from 33 percent of the owner families attend church in Lexington, or elsewhere outside the Athens community.¹²

Oak Island. The Oak Island Homemakers' Club was started in December, 1930, by local women, assisted by the county home demonstration agent. The local women who started the organization had relatives in a neighboring county who belonged to a Homemakers' Club. The Oak Island homemakers made an excellent record. One factor in the club's success was that the officers were energetic young women in their early twenties. These officers had the confidence of their neighbors to a remarkable degree.

With 13 members and an average attendance of 9 (7 members, one visitor and the home demonstration agent), the Oak Island group had a varied record of accomplishments. With the aid of the Farm Bureau Local, drawing mostly from the same families, the one-room public schoolhouse adjacent to the Oak Island Baptist Church was purchased from the Kenton County Board of Education when the Oak Island pupils were transported to the Piner Consolidated School. The women planted flowers and shrubs to improve the grounds, while their husbands of the Farm Bureau made repairs and painted the community house.

The women concluded that one way to retain their own community center was to have social good times, so they purchased a cooking stove for the club and gave an oyster supper, an ice-cream social, held food sales, and engaged in other similar activities by which they paid for the equipment which they had bought on credit. The experience of the organizations included in this study indicates that a reasonable debt which can eventually be paid is beneficial to an organization because it makes for unity, greater activity and interest. Making money and promoting sociability were the joint aims of the good times provided by the organizations.

The regular homemaking projects of the Homemakers' Club such as sewing, blocking hats, making rugs and pillows, room improvement, and canning were given much attention under the guidance of the home demonstration agent and local leaders who attended special one-day schools of instruction.

The leaders of the club gave as some of the worthwhile things accomplished by their organization: "It has created a social atmosphere in the neighborhood that we would not have otherwise." . . .

¹² See Kentucky Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin No. 350, Rural Organization Contacts in Three Kentucky Communities, p. 119.

"It has been a great help socially."... "The club has helped people to get along with each other."... "It has helped the community spirit."... "The members have learned how to can many things that formerly they had trouble in canning successfully."... "The members have learned how to remodel clothing."... "We now have better-planned, cheaper meals that are more nourishing."... "We have learned how to make hats, rugs, Christmas presents, etc., at a minimum cost."

The women of the club reported two difficulties which they are making efforts to correct. The first was that common situation found in so many rural organizations, "Many of the women lack confidence in their ability to appear on the programs." The second was "Only a few of the women can drive an automobile to attend the meetings."

The success of the Oak Island Homemakers' Club was found to be based on the following factors:

1. An interested, selected membership.
2. Enthusiastic, informed local leaders.
3. Competent, technical, professional advisory leadership.
4. A rather definite program of goals to be achieved.

FARMERS' ECONOMIC ORGANIZATIONS

Much of the history of American agriculture is found in the story of defunct farm organizations, local, state and national, but particularly local. Nevertheless those dead farm organizations have made some contribution to the life of the rural community. In Hebron, for instance, present leaders of organizations have for years heard their parents discuss the importance of the Grange, cooperative group action, and a philosophy of rural life supported by strong organizations. Thus the influence of the Hebron Grange was passed on to endow a new generation of local leaders. One of the most far-sighted of the Hebron leaders gave this as the secret of Hebron's unusual wealth of local leaders. The three rural churches served in an outstanding way as training centers for local leaders for many years. Likewise, in the Oak Island community, the Equity Tobacco Pool of 25 years ago and the democratic organization of the local church, established in 1858, have served as training schools for parents of present leaders of the farm bureau local, the former Burley Tobacco Association local, the Homemakers' Club and the church.

The Oak Island Farm Bureau was organized in January, 1920. The first regular monthly meeting was held February 5, 1920.¹³ From the secretary's records it appears that the Burley Tobacco Growers Association was organized in 1923 at a special called meeting of the Farm Bureau and was thereafter conducted as a phase of the Farm Bureau program. The president and secretary of the Farm Bureau were elected to be the same officers for the new tobacco organization. It seems that no effort was made to separate the Burley Tobacco Growers Association from the parent organization. With a duplicate membership this was wise organizational foresight.

The unusual achievement of the Oak Island Farm Bureau as a community organization was largely due to the determination and activity of a group of less than 20 men.

Shortly after being organized, 16 farmers enrolled for the study of soils in a winter soils school conducted by the county agent. Neighborhood leaders were furnished for agricultural extension projects in dairying, hogs, chickens, tobacco, and sheep. Orders for binder twine, grass seed and flour were pooled and placed with the Kenton County Farm Bureau.

Each year the Farm Bureau sponsored a picnic which promoted good fellowship and netted a profit for the treasury. Oyster suppers and ice-cream socials were given to raise money and to promote neighborliness. The local organization purchased lumber for tables, and furnished chairs and other equipment for the community hall. A gift of eight tons of coal was made to a needy family, and \$25 was voted to aid a member whose barn was burned. Eighteen dollars were spent for presents and a treat for the children of the neighborhood at a Christmas entertainment. Later, the proceeds of a home-talent play which was given in two neighboring communities, amounting to \$105, was turned over by the organization to the county Chautauqua which was held in 1931. This helped defray the costs of the meeting so that the admission charge was reduced to a nominal sum.

As an example of the community nature of the organization, its special road committee worked actively for improvements in the community and county. As a means of enlisting cooperation from the county road commission, members of the organization furnished

¹³ Secretary's record book.

teams and donated their labor in a road-building project. The procedure used by the club was first to agree on what they wanted from the county, and then present their request in an organized way thru their chosen representatives. As a result their requests were acted upon favorably.

Altho women do not appear to have attended the Farm Bureau business meetings in any considerable numbers, at one of the early meetings, "a motion was made and carried that the ladies be extended an invitation to attend our meetings."¹⁴ A second motion passed at the same meeting asked "that as many women as men be appointed on the picnic committee."¹⁵ That the decision of the men to give the women a part in the activities of the Farm Bureau was not an empty gesture was shown by the appointment of a committee of three women "to see after the interests of the school."¹⁶

The county and home demonstration agents regularly took advantage of the Farm Bureau meetings to present their plans and projects to Oak Island farm men and women. The informal contacts of the extension agents were a means of building up good will, understanding and friendliness. Frequently, Farm Bureau leaders of Kenton County took advantage of the meetings of the local organization to relate what the county organization was doing. Thus the local organization acted as a clearing house for outside agencies to contact the farm families of the Oak Island community.

The Oak Island Farm Bureau is an example of what can be done by a small aggressive group of farmers under capable local leaders. In this organization every member was willing to do his part. If there was work to do the members did not wait to be called upon, they volunteered. Plans were carried thru to completion, and committees functioned. The minutes show that every committee completed the task assigned to it.

One reason for the confidence of members in the officers and management of enterprises was the frequent itemized reports on finances made promptly after financial transactions. This very important matter is neglected by officers of some rural organizations.

¹⁴ Secretary's record book.

¹⁵ *Ibid*

¹⁶ *Ibid*

